

MEN OF THE HOUR.

THE CASE ASSUMED IDENTITY.



FRANK S. CHANFRAU.

"The Arkansas Traveler."

Frank S. Chanfrau died early on the morning of October 2, 1884, in Jersey City, where he was filling an engagement. His death took place about twelve hours after an attack of paralysis, which was succeeded by one of apoplexy. His son, Henry T. Chanfrau, was present at the bedside when his father died, but Mrs. Chanfrau did not arrive until several hours after the sad event.

New play-goers in the United States but were familiar with Chanfrau's performances. His parts and he were identified to a surprising degree. To the audience Chanfrau was *Mose* or *Kit*, or other character possessing the same qualities of being absolutely unique, picturesque and strikingly faithful. His parts were American types perfectly acted. He did not represent the highest expression of the histrionic art, but he gave the public innocent amusement, as good of its kind as it could be. The wealth and fame which he enjoyed were well earned, and his removal is deeply regretted.

Francis S. Chanfrau was born in New York City, at "The Old Tree House," Bowery and Pell street, February 22, 1824. His father was a French officer on the vessel which brought Lafayette to the United States. Finding his "destiny" in New York he resigned his position and married her. He was unfortunate in business, and at the time of Frank's birth was a porter and lived in a tenement house. Frank, the third of his four sons, was but poorly educated. At an early age he attempted to earn a living as a hatter. Not finding this a genial occupation, he had removed to Cleveland, where he became a shipbuilder, and helped build the first steamboat which ever sailed from that port. Finding the work too hard for him, Frank returned to New York and picked up a living precariously for a year or two. It was while the victim of these disheartening circumstances that his ability as a mimic put him in the way which led to fortune. The enjoyment of his associates when he indulged them with life pictures of characters familiar to them, induced him to join an association of amateurs, known as the "Dramatic Institute." He seems to have been connected with this organization before migrating to the West and on his return to New York availed himself of the acquaintance with players which it had brought him by seeking a position on the stage. His first salaried engagement was as "super" at the Old Bowery Theatre, supplemented as a means of livelihood by various employments during the day. He earned for himself what was better for him than immediate popular success, the appreciation of his colleagues, who wondered at his successful imitations of theatrical people, among them were Tom Hamblin, manager in the house in which he was employed; the elder Booth and Edwin Forrest. Hamblin heard of his success and promoted him to be a utility man. Previously to this event, which gave him a fair start in the profession, Chanfrau was a member of the Volunteer Fire Department of New York, and ran with a well-known "machine," known as

the "Old Maid." His experiences while engaged in this occupation gave him the material for his first professional triumph. After having been at the Old Bowery Theatre some years, Chanfrau played "second juvenile" business at the old Park Theatre, and, in 1848, was engaged as leading comedian at William Mitchell's Olympic Theatre. There his imitations of well-known actors, as "Jerry Clip" in "The Widow's Victim," gave him considerable popularity as an actor.

Soon after he had joined Mitchell's company, Benjamin Baker, stage manager of the Olympic, and now Secretary to the Actor's Fund, wrote a sketch entitled "A Glance of New York." The part of *Mose*, a fire-laddy, was entrusted to Chanfrau, whose appearance was thus described by a local chronicler of that date—1848. "He stood there in his shirt, with his fire coat thrown over his arm. The stovepipe hat then known as the plug, was drawn down over one eye, his trousers tucked into his boots, the stump of a cigar pointed up at an angle of forty-five degrees, his soaplocks plastered flat on his temple, and his jaw protruding with a half human expression of contemptuous ferocity. Not a hand, not a foot moved to give him welcome until, taking the cigar stump from his mouth and turning half way round to give his inimitable spit, he exclaimed, 'I ain't a goin' ter run wid dat merchine any more.' In a moment the audience rose, yelling with delight, for they recognized the familiar portraiture. The next night the theatre was jammed, and so it continued to be for several months." *Mose* was the making of Chanfrau, who played it in the old Chatham Theatre night after night, finishing at the Olympic. This dual arrangement was continued during six months, with Chanfrau as one of three partners who leased the Chatham Street house. The piece played there was called "New York as it is," and was also written by Mr. Baker. Chanfrau's *Mose* outlived both of these trifling plays, and figured also in "The Mysteries and Miseries of New York," "Three Years and After," "Mose Married," and "Mose in California."

Chanfrau's success as *Mose* made him a capitalist. Looking around for a promising means of investment he discovered that Brooklyn, then containing a hundred thousand inhabitants, needed a theatre. He provided one by the conversion of an armory, engaged a good company, and actually, or in sums for which credit was given, sunk \$22,000 in the venture. To escape the persecutions of creditors he accepted an invitation given him by Charles R. Thorne to sail for California. When he returned to New York he was worth \$23,000. *Mose* had made him this snug little fortune in a short time.

Early in the sixties Chanfrau added Mr. Thomas B. De Walden's "Sam" to his repertory, which had pretty well consisted of "Mose" in various phases of life down to that time. It proved a hit, but one less decided than the leading part in "Kit, the Arkansas Traveler," which was first produced during the winter of 1870, and was acted in New York for the first time, May 9, 1871. Mr. Edward Spencer was the writer of the piece which provided Chanfrau the means of his greatest achievement as an actor. As "Kit Redding," he exhibited all his gifts and attainments to the best advantage, and did not live to need another character in the slender list with those with which he has "starred" for a generation. He had been billed to play "Kit" the same evening in which he was fatally stricken by disease.

The departed actor was a generous and noble-minded man, correct in his habits, and a model husband and father. He was a liberal entertainer, interesting, jovial and humorous, and unsurpassed in his powers of mimicry, with which he was wont to set the table on a roar. His marriage to Miss Annata Baker took place at Cincinnati in July, 1856. She was a "Star" actress at the time. The elder of their two children, both sons, is an actor already of considerable reputation, though only twenty-four years old; the younger is at a boarding-school in New York. Mrs. Chanfrau survives her husband.

Chanfrau was worth about \$300,000. He possessed considerable property in

Long Branch, which he made his residence for the past nineteen years of his life, and New York. As an instance of exemplary filial feeling may be mentioned that he bought and furnished a country seat for his parents at Yonkers. Both his parents died there, and the place was then sold for \$25,000.

In personal presence, as most readers know, Chanfrau was handsome and large. He had a fine face, the faithful index of his noble disposition.

The Weather.

As might have been expected, after the recent atmospheric disturbances, a violent rain storm swept over the city on Friday, a torrent of rain driving everybody indoors or into hacks, and the streets leading to the water front were turned into muddy brooks. The sudden fall of rain on the house-tops tasked the carrying capacity of the down-pipes, and on the flat surface of the concrete foundation to the new station-house the rain formed pools of water, which found its way through the interstices and dribbled into the vaults beneath. The rush of water through one of the drain gratings near the Bank brought scurrying to the surface a crowd of cockroaches that, with a solitary centipede sought refuge under the entablature of the bank-building front, from which, when the rain cleared, they were routed by a broom brigade detailed from the bank for that purpose.

Hacks were in great demand, and umbrellas broke out all over the town. Nobody was abroad for a while but the reporters and a few duns, whom no amount of rain could bluff off.

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This will be the second publication of this useful and valuable Annual; and the Compiler, with the aid of several experts, feels sanguine of placing before the public a work that will be thoroughly appreciated, and also one that will commend itself to all residents of the Islands, as well as to Government Officials, Merchants and others residing abroad, who take an interest in the Hawaiian Kingdom.

There will be many valuable additions to the previous issue. The Chronological Tables have been carefully compiled by a *kamaaina*, and will contain matter of special interest in connection with the Islands. In addition to a wide Island circulation, an extensive foreign circulation of the work is guaranteed, thereby making it a valuable means of advertising.

PUBLISHER HONOLULU ALMANAC AND DIRECTORY.

HONOLULU, OCTOBER 30TH, 1884.

ROYAL HAWAIIAN HOTEL.

GEORGE H. FASSETT, - Manager.

The Royal Hawaiian Hotel is one of the leading architectural structures of Honolulu. The grounds upon which it stands comprise an entire square of about four acres, fronting on Hotel Street. This large area affords ample room for a lawn and beautiful walks, which are laid out most artistically with flowering plants and tropical trees. There are twelve pretty cottages within this charming enclosure, all under the Hotel management. The Hotel and cottages afford accommodations for 200 guests. The basement of the Hotel contains the finest billiard hall in the city; also, a first-class bar, well stocked with fine wines and liquors.

The main entrance is on the second floor, to the right of which are the elegantly furnished parlors. A broad passage-way leads from the main hall to the dining-room. These apartments open on to broad verandas, where a magnificent view of the Nuuanu Mountains may be seen through the wealth of tropical foliage that surrounds the balconies.

The fare dispensed is the best the market affords, and is first-class in all respects. Hotel and cottages are supplied with pure water from an artesian well on the premises. The Clerk's office is furnished with the Telephone, by which communication is had with the leading business firms of the city.

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1885.

1885.

WARNING.

Notice is hereby given that all persons found placing dead animals on the reef, attaching them to the harbor buoys, or depositing them where they may be a public nuisance, will be prosecuted.

JOHN H. BROWN,

Agent Board of Health.

Honolulu, Dec. 20, 1884. w&dtf-dec22

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